

necessary for Washington, D.C. to impose their excess regulations, to impose some of the utopian ideas and in many cases to drive these people off that land.

You know it is very easy in the East to tell them what to do in the West because there is not much government land in the East. In the West, my district for example, my district, geographically larger than the State of Florida, 20-some-million acres of Federal land. We know about that land. We do not need Washington, D.C. to tell us.

Sometime take a deep breath and go visit a ranch in Colorado.

AN AWESOME RESPONSIBILITY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Mississippi (Mr. TAYLOR) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. TAYLOR of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, let me first apologize to the wonderful people who work for this House. I am sorry we are keeping you late, I am sorry I am contributing to that.

As far as the American people, I want to apologize for the expense of this speech and the others. It costs about \$8,000 an hour for special orders.

I tried when the Democrats were in the majority to do away with it, to have us use a room upstairs, let these good people, approximately 80 House employees, go home. There is no reason for these 80 people to be here, there is no reason for the clock to keep running. And I hope that some of my Republican friends who are equally cost-conscious would work with me on ending this practice.

Mr. Speaker, there is a room upstairs we can use. We do not have to keep 80 people around. My worries are not so great they need to be transcribed, and I can always ask that they be included in the RECORD if I think it is worthwhile.

I am sorry Mr. DELAY left. I do like Mr. DELAY. But I do feel like he said some things that need to be clarified, and I want the American people to know where I am coming from as I make these remarks.

I have been here almost nine years, and in those nine years have come to the conclusion that both the political parties have degraded themselves to the point where they are not much more than organizations that raise money and peddle influence. So I hope that no one will take this as a partisan speech, but merely somebody who cares about his country and wants to fix it.

I regret that Mr. DELAY would lead the public to believe that we have a balanced budget, because we do not, and I do consider our Nation's debt as the greatest threat to our Nation. I regret to tell the American people that we are now spending a billion dollars a day on interest on that debt and it is growing.

A couple yards away from me is a real neat human being by the name of

DUNCAN HUNTER. He is the chairman of the Subcommittee on Military Procurement of the Committee on National Security. One of DUNCAN's great misfortunes is trying to replace an aging fleet for the Navy, replace aging airplanes for the Air Force, on a very, very small budget. And quite frankly, if we were not squandering a billion dollars a day on interest on the national debt, we could be buying a destroyer a day with enough change left over to buy about 20 Blackhawk helicopters.

That is why it is important that we balance our budget, that is why it is important we be honest with the American people. And it is not a Democrat or Republican issue because, doggone it, they are both guilty in creating the debt, and the only way we are going to get out of debt is working together.

I am sorry to say that the Cato Institute can back up everything that I have said. Actually, overall spending in the first three years that the Republicans have run Congress has increased at a greater rate than the last three years that the Democrats were in the Congress. They are both wrong. It is wrong for both of us.

But defense spending has either shrunk or been frozen under both, and that is equally wrong. There are kids today flying around in 30-year-old CH-46s, 30-year-old CH-47s. Almost a thousand UH-1 Hueys have been grounded because we finally came to the conclusion that it just was not fair, and above all it just was not safe to send those kids up. But people are still flying old F-14s, still flying old C-103s, and they are still going to sea in old ships.

That is why it is important that, number one, we face up to the reality that we are still not balancing the budget, that we are borrowing from the trust funds, and it does not get any easier to get out of that hole for a lot of reasons, but the biggest reason is as a Nation we are getting older. As a Nation we are getting fewer and fewer people who are taxpayers and more and more people who are receiving benefits.

My dad a couple of days ago turned 77 years old, and I will use his generation as an example. When my dad was a teenager in the 1930's, there were 19 working people for every retiree. One hundred years later, in the year 2030, it has been estimated that there will only be 1.2 working people for every retiree. If we do not pay our bills now, we will never pay our bills because the ratio of workers to retirees continues to decline. It gets only worse all the way out to at least halfway through the next century.

So what I am going to ask Mr. DELAY on one side, what I am going to ask my fellow Democrats on the other, let us not claim victory in the budget because we have not even started. We are \$5.5 trillion in debt, and we do not need the Democrats over here or the demagogues over there misleading the public.

We have an awesome responsibility to defend this nation. We have an

equally awesome responsibility to pay our bills. We have an equally awesome responsibility to be honest with the American people, make them aware of the problem and then, as their elected representatives, both Democrats and Republicans, let us solve them.

CAMPAIGN FINANCE REFORM

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. HUTCHINSON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. HUTCHINSON. Mr. Speaker, I want to take this opportunity to address an important issue that really took a different spin this week. As we entered this week in legislative business, I did not expect campaign finance reform to be an issue that was going to be on the front lines of legislative business this week nor next week.

But it took a turn this week, and it goes to show the legislative process works, and I want to express my appreciation, I think the appreciation of the American public, that the leadership indicated their willingness to have a full and fair and open debate on campaign finance reform. The procedure that has been outlined could not be more fair and open than having a base bill that comes to the floor of the House, which is the bipartisan Campaign Integrity Act, the freshman bill that is a bipartisan bill that addresses campaign finance reform, and then it is subject to amendments. It is a full and free open debate that no one can quarrel about as to its fairness.

That is what the American people expect, and that is what they have received, and I think it is a tribute to the leadership for recognizing this, responding to it in a very fair fashion.

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Now, they have selected the freshman bill, it is called. It is really the result of a freshman task force, as the base bill that would come to the House on campaign reform. If you look at this bill, it is bipartisan in nature, but it is also bipartisan in process, and that is why it is so unique.

Let me talk just for a second about how that bill, I suspect, might have been chosen. If you go back to the beginning of this Congress, the two respective freshmen classes, the Democrats and the Republicans, said let's work together on an issue, and they choose finance campaign reform.

A task force of six Republicans and six Democrats met together over the course of 5 months, heard experts on constitutional law. We heard from the Democratic Party and heard from the Republican Party as to what they believed needed to be done.

We heard from the American people. We heard from academia. We heard from everyone imaginable; from the unions to the business side. And from those hearings we learned a lot, but we also came up with a proposal. We said we need to avoid the extremes. That is